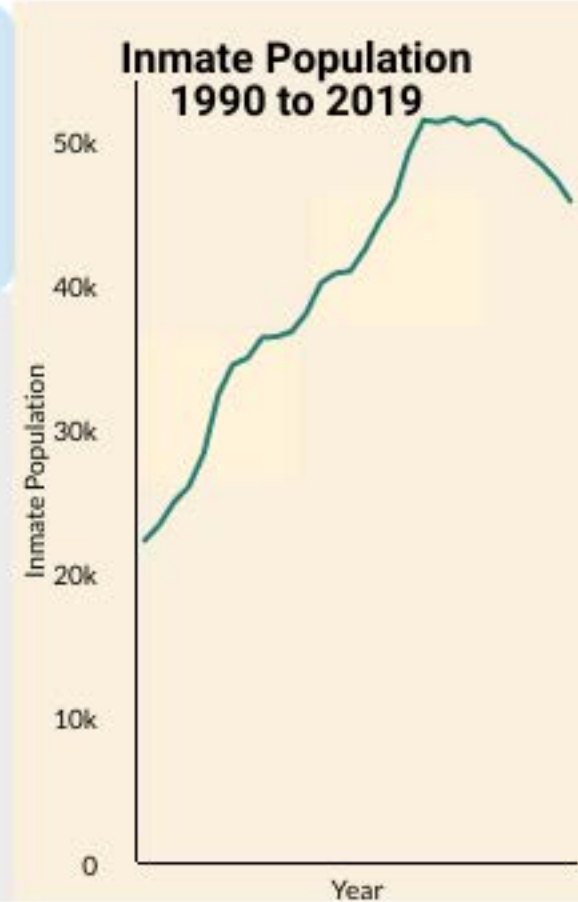




What drives inmate population?



New Court Commitments

Key factors affecting the number of new inmates:

Crime rate, percent of offenders sentenced to incarceration (instead of alternatives in the community), and length of prison sentence (shorter sentences served in county jails; longer in state prisons).



Sentence Length

Longer sentences can drive up prison populations even if the overall number of new inmates is flat or decreasing.

Releases

Key factors affecting the number of inmates released:

Sentence length, behavior during incarceration, and the speed at which the Parole Board makes parole decisions.



Parole violations

Most prison sentences have a minimum and maximum date. If an inmate is released early, they are under parole supervision until the maximum sentence date.



If an offender violates the terms of their parole they may be returned to prison to serve the remainder of their sentence. Parole violators made up 26% of all prison admissions in 1990 and 50% in 2018; a pattern of release and re-commitment often called the "revolving door" of corrections.

Probation and parole violators make up 15% of the state prison population.

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
Annual Statistical Report, 2018